

CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims.

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) A gaming method wherein an array of symbols is displayed and an award is granted based on the displayed array of symbols, the method comprising:

displaying on a first display screen of a gaming machine, in a first game, an a first array of randomly selected symbols by a gaming machine, the first array including at least one special symbol in a first position in the first array;

~~receiving signals from a player initiating a second game immediately following the first game;~~

displaying on a second display screen of the gaming machine, in a second game, a second array of randomly selected symbols;

shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to a second position prior to an array of symbols in the second game being displayed to the player to a second position in the second array on the second display screen, wherein the shifted special symbol is combinable with symbols in the second array to form winning combinations of symbols; and

~~subsequent to shifting the position of the at least one special symbol, displaying in the second game an array of randomly selected symbols by the gaming machine, the array including the at least one special symbol in the second position in the array; and~~

granting any award to the player for the second game based upon the symbols displayed in the second game including the at least one special symbol.

2. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to a the second position comprises randomly shifting a position of the at least one special symbol ~~in the array~~ from the first position to the second position.

3. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to a the second position comprises shifting a position of the at least one special symbol ~~in the array~~ in a predetermined manner from the first position to the second position.

4. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein displaying in a first game ~~an a first~~ array of randomly selected symbols ~~by a gaming machine~~ comprises displaying in a the first game ~~an the first~~ array of randomly selected symbols ~~by a gaming machine~~ appearing on a plurality of virtual reel strips, the at least one special symbol being on at least one reel strip in a fixed position relative to other symbols on the reel strip.

5. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein displaying in a first game ~~an a first~~ array of randomly selected symbols ~~by a gaming machine~~ comprises displaying in a the first game ~~an the first~~ array of randomly selected symbols by a gaming machine appearing on a plurality of virtual reel strips, wherein the at least one special symbol is not in a fixed position on a virtual reel strip.

6. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein displaying in a first game ~~an a first~~ array of randomly selected symbols by a gaming machine comprises selecting the at least one special symbol to appear in the first array based on a non-random event.

7. (cancelled)

8. (cancelled)

9. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol comprises a plurality of special symbols.

10. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising terminating the use of the at least one special symbol after the at least one special symbol is used in a winning combination of symbols.

11. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising terminating the use of the at least one special symbol after a predetermined number of games.

12. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol has a wild card function.

13. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol is a high value symbol.

14. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol has a multiplier function.

15. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol triggers a bonus game.

16. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein the first array of symbols is a 5x3 array.

17. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein granting an award comprises granting an award based on combinations of symbols across one or more pay lines.

18. (cancelled)

19. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein new special symbols are generated in one or more additional games and are randomly shifted in position during subsequent games.

20. (currently amended) A gaming device comprising:

~~a display area~~ first display screen for displaying a first game, the first game displaying ~~an~~ a first array of symbols, certain combinations of symbols across at least one pay line determining an award to a player;

a second display screen for displaying a second game, the second game displaying a second array of symbols, certain combinations of symbols determining an award to a player; and

at least one processor for carrying out the following method:

displaying on the first display screen, in ~~a~~ the first game, ~~an~~ the first array of randomly selected symbols ~~by a gaming machine~~, the first array including at least one special symbol in a first position in the first array;

displaying on the second display screen, in the second game, the second array of randomly selected symbols;

~~receiving signals from a player initiating a second game immediately following the first game;~~

shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to a second position ~~prior to an array of symbols in the second game being displayed to the player~~ in the second array on the second display screen, wherein the at least one shifted special symbol is combinable with symbols in the second array to form winning combinations of symbols;

~~subsequent to shifting the position of the at least one special symbol, displaying in the second game an array of randomly selected symbols by the gaming machine, the array including the at least one special symbol in the second position in the array; and~~

granting any award to the player for the second game based upon the symbols displayed in the second game including the at least one special symbol.

21. (currently amended) The device of Claim 20 wherein shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to a the second position comprises randomly shifting a position of the at least one special symbol ~~in the array from the first position to the second position.~~

22. (cancelled)

23. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol comprises a plurality of special symbols.

24. (original) The device of Claim 20 further comprising terminating the use of the at least one special symbol after the at least one special symbol is used in a winning combination of symbols.

25. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol has a wild card function.

26. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol is a high value symbol.

27. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol has a multiplier function.

28. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol triggers a bonus game.

29. (currently amended) The device of Claim 20 wherein the first array of symbols is a 5x3 array.

30. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein granting an award comprises granting an award based on combinations of symbols across one or more pay lines.

31. (currently amended) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol is selected at random to be included in the first array.